ETHEL'S EXPECTATIONS; OR, A MOTHER'S MISTAKE.

BY EMMA LESLIE,

Author of "Bolingbroke's Folly," "Gerald's Dilemma," etc., etc.

"'A nice friend you are,' he said, reproachfully." *p.* 51.

CHAPTER IV.

SUNSHINE AND CLOUDS.

As the early spring days grew longer and warmer, the brother and sister contrived to meet more frequently, and it soon became an understood thing that Horace Greenslade should join them at some time during their walks, and take Dorothy back to Mrs. Westlake's. Of course, being strangers to the neighbourhood, they were glad of his company, to point out the way and to take the direction of their excursions when half-holiday gave them an opportunity of going farther afield than the immediate precincts of the town.

The subject of Mr. Sutherland had been dropped. Dorothy had told Mrs. Greenslade that her sister often visited the old man, as she had always been a favourite of his, but beyond this she did not think she had any right to speak. Horace had written and promised to go and see this unknown cousin when he could leave his work without inconvenience; but he seemed in no hurry to make it convenient, and there the matter rested.

The young people lived in a dream of happiness that lightened Dorothy's rather tedious work, and made her even more diligent and painstaking with her duties at Mrs. Westlake's. The children grew quite fond of the new teacher, and Mrs. Westlake had good reason to be satisfied with Dorothy; for the fame of her kind, gentle manner with the children brought her several new scholars the next term, so that everybody could rejoice in the girl's happy content in her new sphere of duty.

It had come to be the rule that each Sunday before they parted, plans were made for meeting on the following Wednesday, which was an early closing day in the town, as well as the school half-holiday; and how much Dorothy counted upon these weekly meetings with her new friend, she did not know, until one Sunday evening, as they were walking home from church, Horace suddenly said, "I am afraid I shall not be able to join you next Wednesday, Miss Maldon."

"Why?" asked Dorothy, quickly, and with some dismay in her tone.

"Well, you know the three months my cousin gave me within which I was to pay him the visit he asked, are nearly up, and I have written to say I will go next Tuesday, as Lord Mount thinks I could better be spared now for a week than later in the summer. It will be a long week to me, Dorothy," he added, significantly.

The girl was silent, but she did not withdraw the hand which he held tightly clasped in his; yet in that silence each learned the secret of the other, and their hearts sang

for joy, though the prospect of parting even for a week was harder than ever.

"If it is possible, I will shorten the time, and come back on the Saturday; but as I cannot get away until Tuesday evening, Mr. Sutherland may think this is hardly fair. May I write and tell you whether I am likely to get home for Sunday?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," answered Dorothy; and the prospect of getting this letter comforted her, though it would hardly compensate for the loss of her friend's society during the week.

She met her brother and went for a walk with him on Wednesday, and then heard that Mr. Greenslade had left the previous evening on his journey to his cousin. She also received a letter from her mother during the week, telling her that Ethel had gone on a visit to the Manor House for a few days; and Dorothy saw in this enough to make her feel restless and unhappy.

Mr. Sutherland had planned the marriage of this young man's father; what was more natural than that he should follow out a similar course with regard to the son, and try to marry him to Ethel?

That, of course, was why she had been asked to stay at the Manor House just now; and Dorothy, in her self-depreciation, thought it was most likely to succeed. Ethel was prettier, and had a winning manner that rarely failed to strike a stranger with admiration, and therefore it was scarcely likely that Horace, thrown into her society for the whole time he would be staying there, could be expected to return with the same feeling for Dorothy that he had when he went away.

These were the thoughts that haunted and tortured the girl after the arrival of her mother's letter, and so persistent were they that she grew quite miserable, and became so pale and depressed as to attract the attention of Mrs. Westlake.

"My dear Miss Maldon, I am afraid you are not well," said the lady. "This sudden change to warm weather is affecting you, perhaps. I wish I could relieve you of your charge this afternoon."

"Oh, no, no," interrupted Dorothy; "I can manage very well. Mamma's letter disturbed me a little, that is all; but things will be right again in a day or two."

"I hope she is not ill," said Mrs. Westlake.

"No, she is quite well, thank you; but—but my sister has had to leave home again."

"Ah, I see you do not like the idea of your mother being left alone in the house, and I do not wonder at it. I think your sister ought to stay with her now that you are away from home. But you must not let this trouble you, dear," added the lady, in a kindly tone.

Dorothy left the room and went upstairs. "What a hypocrite I am!" she exclaimed, half aloud, when she had closed the door. School was over for the present, and she could afford to indulge in a good cry by way of relief to her overcharged heart. "It is wicked to protest, I know, but why should Ethel take everything as she does? I can't—I can't spare Horace," she sobbed, falling on her knees beside the bed, and trying to bring into practice the lesson she had learned, or tried to learn, some weeks before.

She had succeeded fairly well in casting the care concerning Ethel's fortune upon God as she was taught, but to do the same now that it seemed likely her sister would supplant her in the affections of the man she had learned to love was altogether another matter. Yet it would have to be borne, she feared, and so she might as well face the worst, and get her fight over.

It was Dorothy's way of doing things; and, recognising that a struggle with herself was inevitable, she plunged into it at once.

Recalling the incident of her silk dress, she remembered that she had found it much easier to give it to her mother to dispose of as she pleased than to give it herself to Ethel; and so now, in this larger affair, she could not give up this heart's love of hers to her sister, but she would try to place it unreservedly in the hands of her Father in heaven, that He might dispose of it as seemed best to Him.

So prayers and tears were mingled, and at last it seemed to Dorothy that she had conquered, for she could say, "Thy will be done, O Lord, my God and Father in heaven." A sense of peace and trust stole into her heart; and presently, when she had bathed her face and brushed her hair, she went downstairs, feeling altogether better able to do her afternoon work, though the children were generally more restless and trying during the after part of the day than in the morning.

The following day was Saturday, but Dorothy had persuaded herself that the anticipated letter would not come now, and of course Horace Greenslade would be in no hurry to return. But though she had said this to herself a good many times, she still waited and watched for the postman.

And after all a letter with a strange address upon it came, and in a flutter of excitement Dorothy tore open the envelope. But her heart sank the next moment, for it only contained a few formal words announcing that Horace would not be home for Sunday, and might be detained a day or two longer than he originally intended to stay.

"Of course," said Dorothy bitterly, and she went upstairs to have her fight over again; for she knew now that she had somehow clung to the hope that the young man would have written a long letter to her, telling her all about his visit and what he thought of Ethel. But he made no mention of anything or anybody, which to Dorothy seemed to imply that he already regretted saying so much as he had done the last time she saw him, and that he had merely written because he had promised to do so.

On Sunday she went to meet Tom and take tea with Mrs. Greenslade, as usual, and both of them noticed how pale and ill she looked.

"I have not felt very well the last day or two," admitted Dorothy. "The children have been more tiresome, or I have been less patient."

"Children are tiresome sometimes," said Mrs. Greenslade; but she made a shrewd guess that it was not the children entirely that had caused Dorothy to look so pale and weary.

Of course, Tom talked of the absent Horace, and his sister was willing enough to listen to all he said about missing him in the evening when he came home and sat down to his books, but she herself did not mention him by name—a circumstance that did not escape Mrs. Greenslade's notice, and she smiled to herself as she watched the girl.

"Now I know why it was that Horace was so willing to go to this cousin at last," she whispered to herself. "Poor little girl! she misses him sadly, I am sure, and it isn't a very happy Sunday for him away from her. He has spoken, I can see by her face, and she feels his absence, coming just

after, as it must have done; for no word had been said last Sunday, I know."

Of course, Mrs. Greenslade had been watching the signs of the growing attachment with love-sharpened eyes, and was not sorry that her boy should make this choice before he went to see his cousin, who would think, perhaps, that he had the right to make the choice for him; but she was careful not to betray her thoughts to Dorothy.

This feeling unconsciously imparted a tone of reserve to the widow's manner, which Dorothy in her present sensitive state construed to her own disadvantage, and she could not help thinking that Horace must have written and told his mother something of what was being done at the Manor House, and of his liking for his cousin's heiress.

Altogether it was not a happy day for anybody, and Dorothy went home feeling weary and dispirited, and half disposed to tell Mrs. Westlake that she did not think she could stay beyond the six months agreed upon as a trial time.

But here, again, Dorothy's strong sense of duty came to her help. Mrs. Westlake had been very kind to her, and was so well satisfied that she had already raised her salary, so that she had been able to send some money to her mother. Now, it would be ungrateful to her employer, and would certainly disappoint her mother, if she should give up her situation just as she had learned to be useful in it.

There was the future to consider, too. Mr. Sutherland might live for years and years, and therefore to build her hopes upon his money would never do, and she might be a long time before she found another situation so comfortable and suitable as this was. Painful as it would be for her to meet Horace Greenslade indifferently, as she would have to do in future, she made up her mind to endure the ordeal; for, after all, he would doubtless be her sister's husband by-and-by, and so it would be useless to run away from her duty to try and escape him.

But it was hard, very hard, to settle down to the every-day duties of life without the hope that had lately sweetened all her tasks.

Unconsciously to herself she had looked forward to the next meeting with her brother, when some walk was to be taken, or some little pleasure engaged in, to which Horace would contribute his share, or in which he would be a partner. Now she knew that it was his participation in it that gave it most of its flavour; that the thought of meeting Tom did not raise her spirits and make her want to dance and skip as before—that it was her brother's friend rather than himself that had given all the charm and colour to her life since she had been here.

It was a rude awakening for the girl from a pleasant day-dream, and one she was never likely to forget. No one else could ever be to her what this friend had become. She began to realise this, and that it was not easy to give up such a friendship—such a dear hope as had come into her life. To say, "Thy will be done," when it seemed likely that all the sweetness and flavour of life must be given up, was a lesson that could not be mastered all at once. Dorothy was disappointed, for she had to learn that one fight, one conquest, does not mean final victory, but the same ground has to be gone over again and again. Her little room at Mrs. Westlake's was the scene of many a struggle, many a prayerful, tearful fight, during the next few days.

On Wednesday the brother and sister met, and Tom told her that Horace had not returned, and was not expected until Saturday.

"I had a letter from mother this morning, and she tells me that Ethel is stopping at the Manor House again," went on Tom, little dreaming how his words hurt his sister as he added, "She and Horace must be having a fine time together, with nothing to do but enjoy themselves."

"Does—does he mention Ethel in his letters to his mother?" asked his sister, in a faltering tone.

"I say, Dollie, don't you feel well?" questioned the obtuse Tom.

"My head aches a little; it is the warm weather, perhaps."

"Warm fiddlesticks! It's worrying over those children and their lessons. Mrs. Greenslade said you were not looking well on Sunday, and she thought the school work was a little too much for you."

"But what could I do, Tom, if I gave this up?" said Dorothy, still with a quiver in her voice.

"Go home and take care of the mater. You have no business to have to turn out to earn your living in this fashion."

"Did Mrs. Greenslade say she thought I ought to go home?" asked Dorothy.

"Bless me, no. What business is it of Mrs. Greenslade's? She only said she thought the school was too much for you, and so do I, and you have no business to do it."

"But I must, Tom—at least until Ethel gets rich, or is—is married."

"Married! married! Our Ethel married! I should pity the man who had her, unless she alters."

"Perhaps she will alter, or if she is very fond of him it would make all the difference."

Tom shook his head. "'Of all her mother's children, she loves herself the best,' and until this selfishness is got out of her, Ethel will never be worth a row of pins to anybody," he said, oracularly.

"But, Tom, you won't say anything about that to Mrs. Greenslade?" exclaimed Dorothy.

Her brother looked at her in perplexity. "What notion have you got in your head that you should be so afraid of Mrs. Greenslade?" he demanded, and he looked at his sister curiously as he spoke.

"Well, promise me you won't talk about Ethel to your friends, for you know, Tom, you are hardly fair to her sometimes."

"But what have you got in your head about Ethel and the Greenslades? Has mother been saying anything to you?"

"I haven't heard from mother this week," answered his sister, avoiding the direct question.

"But something must have been said. You don't think Horace would be such a muff as to be caught by her pretty face, do you?" said Tom, suddenly facing round and looking hard at Dorothy.

Her cheeks flamed under his earnest gaze, and she did not reply to his question for a minute, but at last she managed to say, "I think that was why Mr. Sutherland wanted him to go there."

"And you never told me before, that I might have warned him!" Tom fairly danced in his indignation. "A nice friend you are," he said, reproachfully. "I tell you that fellow is a world too good for Ethel, though she is my sister, and I suppose I ought not to say it."

"Of course you ought not. I have often told you that you could not judge fairly because you took a dislike to her."

"To her ways," corrected Tom. "But Horace will have

no time to find out what she is like, for of course she will be on her best behaviour while she is there with him, and I suppose by the time he really knows her it will be too late to alter things. If it is so, it will be all your fault, remember, Dorothy," he added.

Dorothy did not reply to this, and Tom went on grumbling. "I suppose this is the secret of his long stay, for I know he intended to come home on Monday or yesterday, and he did say he should try to get away last Saturday, if possible."

"Yes, I know he did," said Dorothy, finding she was expected to say something.

"Oh, he told you that, did he? He said to me as he went away that it would not seem like Sunday to him unless he could come back and spend it at home in the usual way. He is very fond of his mother, you know," concluded Tom.

"Yes, I know he is," and then there seemed nothing more to say, for Tom was cross, and inclined to blame his sister for not speaking to him before of what she thought Mr. Sutherland intended by this visit. Once more, before they parted, Dorothy tried to get him to promise that he would say no word to Mrs. Greenslade about the matter, but Tom declined to be bound by such a pledge.

"I shall wait and see how things are," he said. "You have opened my eyes, and I don't mean to let you tie my hands, or my tongue either, Miss Dollie. If Ethel were like you, now, it would make all the difference, or if she were really what she seemed to be in the old days; but now! Why, Dollie, a man would be simply marrying into misery to have Ethel as she is; and it would be our duty to save anybody from that, and especially a nice fellow like Horace Greenslade."

"Now, don't be in too much of a hurry about the matter. Wait and see, and perhaps I will speak myself as soon as he comes back."

Dorothy spoke thus to prevent her brother saying more than would be wise, or even fair; but he was willing to promise not to mention the subject to Horace until after she had seen him. "I daresay you could do it better than I, if you would just make up your mind to tell him fairly all about Ethel."

"Very well, I will, Tom; and if I fail, then you may try what you can do—I mean if my courage fails about it."

But Dorothy made up her mind that, hard as the task might be now, her courage should not fail; for Tom would give anything but a fair account of Ethel, and after all she was not so bad as Tom thought her, though she had proved herself selfish and unfeeling upon more than one occasion.

(*Continued on page* 65.)

"COME, YE MOURNERS."

COME, ye mourners, plunged in sorrow,
And a Christian's call obey!
Come, all ye who dread to-morrow,
And through tears behold to-day;
Come! and Calvary's mount ascending,
There with me in fancy view
Christ beneath the burden bending
Of the cross He bore for you.

Friends forsaking, foes remaining,
See His wrongs, His shame, His pain!
See Him all earth's woes sustaining,
That its sons might heaven obtain.
See the horrid insults offered!
See the more than heathen spite!
Could it be that He who suffered
Was the Lord of life and light?

Yes, the temple's veil is rending!
Darkness shrouds the noontide hour!
Earthquakes, too, their witness lending,
Speak the Victim's name and power!
View the blood that's from Him streaming
With affection's grateful eyes!
With that blood your souls redeeming—
'Tis for *you* He bleeds and dies.

And shall you, your woes bewailing,
Murmuring, share your Saviour's pain?
Sinners! mourners! trials hailing,
Count each earthly loss a gain!
Come to Him, and, sin forsaking,
Set His cross before your view;
Courage thence and comfort taking,
Live for Him who died for *you*.

AMELIA OPIE.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

IN the course of a conversation with Madame Campan, Napoleon Bonaparte remarked: "The old systems of instruction seem to be worth nothing; what is yet wanting in order that the people should be properly educated?" "Mothers," replied Madame Campan. The reply struck the Emperor. "Yes," said he; "here is a system of education in one word. Be it your care, then, to train up mothers who shall know *how* to educate their children!"

Home is the first and most important school of character. It is there that every human being receives his *best* moral training, or his *worst;* for it is there that he imbibes those principles of conduct which endure through manhood.

The child's character is the nucleus of the man's; all after education is but *superposition*, the *form* of the crystal remains the same. Milton says, "The childhood shows the man, as morning shows the day." Those impulses which last *longest* and are rooted in the *deepest*, always have their origin near our birth. It is then that the germs of virtues or vices, feelings or sentiments, are first implanted which determine greatly the character for life. Scott received his first bent towards ballad literature from his mother's recitations in his hearing long before he learned to read. Childhood is like a mirror which reflects in after life the images first presented to it. The first joy, the first sorrow, the first success, the first failure, the first achievement, the first misadventure paint the foreground of a child's life.

This being a truth, can mothers be too careful in choosing associates for their children, who will direct their steps in truthfulness? That mother is wise who gives up much of her time to the nursery, and she will be amply repaid in after life. A great musical composer described a good mother as "Nature's chef d'œuvre."

From the Painting by A. E. Dinet,]

"Friends forsaking, foes remaining,
See His wrongs, His shame, His pain!"

[*Exhibited in the Paris Salon*, 1892.

FOR MOTHERS AND WIVES.

BY PHYLLIS BROWNE.

Small Savings.

ONCE on a day it was taken as a truism that women were more extravagant than men. Now, however, the world seems to be coming to the opinion that women are the thrifty members of the community. Thus a well-known writer said the other day that women, from the very habit of their lives, are more particular about details, and more careful as to small economies, than men are. The love of making bargains, which amounts almost to a mania with some women, is after all only a form of unreasonable economy. "Before a man can be rich, he must ask his wife's leave," said Poor Richard; and where married folks "get on," it is frequently the case that success has been quite as much the consequence of the wife's faculty for saving, as of the husband's faculty for earning money.

We grant, then, that capable mothers and wives are becoming more thrifty than they used to be. But what a pity it is that, with all their saving, they so seldom try to save their own steps! Yet these are amongst the small things not to be despised. One half of the conscientious, hard-working mothers of to-day are wearing themselves out with toil, much of which is unnecessary and unprofitable. To let "the head save the heels" is a triumph of economy, and while we honour mothers who "do with their might whatsoever their hands find to do," we feel that they make a mistake when they do beyond their strength. When once the love of husband, children, and home has taken possession of a woman's heart and life, she does not need to be urged to increase her efforts on their behalf, but rather to let the efforts she must make be controlled by reason. "A mother is the holiest thing alive," said Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and no other person can adequately fill a mother's place. Therefore, mothers, for the sake of your loved ones, save unnecessary steps, and with them your strength.

Other People's Children.

"Never hit another woman's child," said one working woman to another. "There's nothing like it for getting you into trouble." That is easily said, but how prone we mothers are, not perhaps to hit, but to sit in judgment on other people's children! We can see so clearly how these children should be managed, and we can unhesitatingly point out the mistakes the other people make. With half an eye we can discern that if Mrs. Smith were less indulgent, her children would be more obedient; if Mrs. Robinson were less strict, her children would not be so rude. Sometimes, even, we feel qualified to draw up a table of rules for the management of our neighbours' children. Yet are our own children faultless? Let us display our cleverness at home. We shall find scope there for all our powers.

How to Make Children Truthful.

Many mothers are in doubt as to what they can do to further the establishment in their children of the habit of truthfulness. The subject is surrounded with difficulties, and there is no other direction in which we may more quickly do harm when wishing to do good. Our first duty, however, is to be ourselves absolutely straightforward and true, not only in word, but in act and deed, even at the cost of inconvenience. In this matter, example is worth far more than precept. Children are exceedingly quick to discover what is true and what is false; and the mother who once acts a lie before her child, is practically taking him by the hand and leading him on the downward road.

Excessive punishments lead a child to falsehood as much as anything. Truth, we must remember, is the child of Trust; Falsehood is the child of Fear. Lies would never have been invented if no one had been afraid. Thus Dr. Abbott says, "Flogged children and spoilt children compose the great body of the army of liars."

Mothers are very wrong when they allow nurses, or indeed anyone, to say to a child, "Are you speaking the truth? Are you sure?" Still worse is it to say, "You are not telling me a lie?" Children should be *expected* to speak the truth as a matter of course. The first Napoleon used to say, "Soldiers behave as they are treated." So both children and grown-up people behave very much as they are expected to behave.

It is a great mistake to confuse falsehood with the exercise of the imagination. Imaginative children often invent glaring fictions when asked to state facts; but it does not follow that they are telling lies. Imagination is a Divine gift; it ought not to be killed the first time it dares to show itself. What is wanted is that it should be recognised for what it is, and dealt with accordingly. Thus a child is asked a simple question, and makes an obviously inaccurate reply. "Oh, Mary, I think you are romancing now," says mother; "that is scarcely correct." And Mary and mother laugh together over the romancing, while Mary is shown the distinction between romance and truth.

One Way of Keeping Table Knives in Good Condition.

Have housewives noticed that to put good steel knives into hot fat is sure to make them less sharp? It is the case, however. This is one reason why table knives should never be used for cooking purposes. Careless workers will often take the "first knife that comes handy" when a knife is required; the consequence being that the knives get blunt, and the housewife is puzzled to know why. Good managers not only put everything in its proper place, they keep everything to its proper use.

What to do with the Cold Mutton.

Housewives who, when examining the contents of the larder, find themselves face to face with the remains of a joint such as a leg or shoulder of mutton, which consist chiefly of bone with not enough meat upon it to make slices for hash, yet too much meat to put in the stock-pot, are advised to try the following recipe. The dish produced will not furnish a dinner for a hungry family, but it will make an excellent luncheon for one or two people:—

Trim away from the bone all unsightly and objectionable portions, and leave only what is good to eat. Melt a slice of sweet dripping the size of a small egg in a stewpan, and mix a tablespoonful of flour smoothly with it. Add gradually a breakfast-cupful of hot stock, stir the sauce till it boils, and put in the joint with an onion, a pinch of mixed herbs, and plenty of pepper and salt. Cover closely, and stew gently for half an hour; then add four or five peeled potatoes, and stew gently for another half an hour. Cut the meat off the bone, and serve very hot with the potatoes and sauce on the dish.

HEALTH AT HOME.

A LETTER FROM MISS NIGHTINGALE TO VILLAGE MOTHERS.

Miss Florence Nightingale.

WHO would not do their utmost to ensure health at home? An unhealthy home, as every thoughtful woman is aware, is a source of untold expense, suffering, and care. The question of health is one which no wise mother dare neglect, especially as it is to her chiefly the family look both for the prevention of illness and for cure in time of sickness.

Seeing the importance of the subject, and the great ignorance of the laws of health which exists, it is with extreme gratification that we view the earnest efforts which are being made to spread practical knowledge on the matter. It may be news to our readers to learn that the Buckinghamshire County Council has adopted a plan for sending out lady lecturers, well trained for their work, to give instruction to village folk in all matters affecting the health of the cottager. The mode of operation is for the lecturer, who has been carefully selected as a duly qualified and sympathetic person, to give an address at the village schoolroom, to which the mothers of the neighbourhood are invited, after which she turns herself into a friendly visitor, and goes the round of the homes of her audience. We cannot speak too highly in praise of the scheme, which will ere long, we trust, be adopted in every county throughout the kingdom. Miss Florence Nightingale, that princess of nurses, has taken the leadership of this movement, and both by voice and pen is earnestly advocating its intense practical importance. Urging its claims on the attention of a gentleman deeply interested in such matters, she recently wrote :—

"Health in the Home has not been carried home to the hundreds of thousands of rural mothers and girls, upon whom so largely depends the health of the rural population. In fact, they do not believe in sanitation as affecting health, as preventing disease. I have been making assiduous inquiries for educated women trained in such a way that they could personally bring their knowledge home to the cottagers' wives on a mission of health in rural districts. For this they must be in touch and in love, so to speak, with the poor, and know how to show them better things without giving offence.

"The needs of home health-bringing require different, but not lower qualifications than sick nursing, and are more varied, as well as demanding tact and judgment unlimited. They require an intense and real belief in sanitation, and that life or death may lie in a grain of dust or a drop of water, or other such minutiæ, which are not minutiæ, but Goliaths—and the Health Missioner must be a David to slay them, and have his sweet voice, and must be trained as he was to fight the giants with the simple weapons of everyday use."

Following, we give a letter which Miss Nightingale has addressed to village mothers by way of introducing to them the lady lecturer. It merits the thoughtful perusal of every mother in the land.—

DEAR HARD-WORKING FRIENDS,—I am a hard-working woman, too. May I speak to you? And will you excuse me, though not a mother?

You feel with me that every mother who brings a child into the world has the duty laid upon her of bringing up the child in such health as will enable him to do the work of his life. But though you toil all day for your children, and are so devoted to them, this is not at all an easy task.

We should not attempt to practise dressmaking or any other trade without any training for it; but it is generally impossible for any woman to get any teaching about the management of health, yet health is to be learnt. And although you are more skilled in the practical work of every-day life, yet this Lady Lecturer has had special opportunities of studying the reasons why certain things are good or bad for health. But it depends very much more upon you than upon her that these lectures should be of any use to you. You must make use of her, and get out of her the particular knowledge that you want.

The cottage homes of England are, after all, the most important of the homes of any class, and they should be pure in every sense, pure in body and in mind.

Boys and girls must grow up healthy, with clean minds, and clean bodies, and clean skins. And for this to be possible the air, the earth, and the water that they grow up in and have around them must be clean. Fresh air, not bad air; clean earth, not foul earth; pure water, not dirty water; and the first teachings and impressions they have at home must all be pure, and gentle, and firm. It is *home* that teaches the child, after all, more than any other schooling. A child learns before it is three whether it shall obey its mother or not, and before it is seven wise men tell us that its character is almost formed.

There is, too, another thing—Orderliness. We know your daily toil and love; may not the busiest and hardest life be somewhat lightened, the day mapped out, so that each duty has the same hours?

Now you may compare this lady's inexperience and your practical knowledge of the things of every-day life. But though she may be inexperienced in the things you have to do, yet she may by her knowledge in a humble, not patronising, or positive, or prying way, help you to help yourselves.

This is not a lecture so much as a homely talk about homes. If you would make a friend of her, and ask her questions, it would be far more possible for her to help.

Then think what enormous extra trouble it entails on mothers when there is sickness. It is worth while to try to keep the family in health, to prevent the sorrow, the anxiety, the trouble of illness, of which so much can be prevented.

When a child has lost its health, how often the mother says: "O, if I had only known! but there was no one to tell me." And, after all, it is health and not sickness that is our natural state—the state that God intends for us. There are more people to pick us up when we fall than to enable us to stand upon our feet. God did not intend all mothers to be accompanied by doctors, but He meant all children to be cared for by mothers. God bless your work and labour of love. FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE.

"MOTHER IS HOLY!"

LITTLE Bernard knelt in his white night-dress at auntie's knee, dimpled hands folded, merry eyes closed, and an expression of sweet solemnity on his baby face. He was lisping part of the "Children's Litany" for his evening prayer—

"Jesu, from Thy throne on high,
Far above the bright blue sky,
Look on me with loving eye,
Hear me, Holy Jesu!

"When I lie asleep at night,
Ever may Thy angels bright,
Keep me safe till morning's light:
Hear me, Holy Jesu!

"May I grow from day to day
Glad to learn each holy way,
Ever ready to obey:
Hear me, Holy Jesu!"

"Do you know what *holy* means?" asked auntie, when the child had finished, wondering if that oft-recurring word conveyed any definite meaning to his infant mind.

Bernie shook his head.

"It means *good, quite* good, *always* good, like Jesus was. We must all try to be good like Jesus, you know."

"Yes," answered the little fellow, gravely; adding, after a pause, "*Mother is holy.*"

What a precious testimony from those innocent lips! Where is the mother who would not covet similar praise from the true heart of her little child? And who, receiving it, would not feel humbled to the dust with a sense of her own unworthiness, and pray to be made a more fit ideal of moral beauty?

The good opinion of a little child is more easily earned than that of a grown person. He is utterly trustful; he is not in the least critical. Be kind and loving towards him, sympathetic and tender, and his heart is yours. Whatever your flaws of character may be, in his eyes you are perfect; not one word of detraction will he hear. Your peculiarities are unnoticed; foibles that draw down upon you the censure of others are beautiful to him; your very faults are virtues. He loves you, and that is enough. Such responsibility is almost terrifying to contemplate. A child's judgment of right and wrong may be warped for a lifetime by the errors or inconsistencies of her by whom his earliest affections were gained.

Yet, blind as our tiny ones are to sins which the world rightly condemns, they are keen to detect injustice, untruthfulness, or unreliability as far as may immediately concern themselves. Many would claim to be the *beau idéal* of every virtue in the eyes of offspring or charge, who are far from being worthy so great an honour. "Because I say so," even from the lips of a parent, is no guarantee of veracity to the child who has once or twice been deceived; and "Because I tell you to," no assurance that a command is just when once his faith in our wisdom has been shaken. If a prohibition has once been observed to arise from selfishness or petulance, rather than from necessity, obedience will be difficult to regain. A child's love and admiration must be the spontaneous tribute of its own heart; it can never be demanded, even by a parent, as a right; and to such demands it is little likely to respond.

There must come, moreover, a time in every child's life when, as a being responsible to God, he must question the righteousness of all human authority, and compare his every ideal with the one great Pattern of the race. Happy the parent whose character and code of maxims will stand this test! Thrice blessed she whose thinking son or daughter, looking around with the eyes of an awakening soul, tasting in early man or womanhood of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, can still say, with the undimmed trust of infancy, "Mother is holy!" J. C.

MRS. GODFREY'S TALENT.

BY A. STUART FLETCHER.

"HE'S the fretfullest child that ever was!"

"And no wonder, with his mother neglecting of him as she do."

And Mrs. Biggs administered a reproving slap to her own youngest, who was pulling over the milk-jug.

"Neglecting of him! What do you mean, Mrs. Biggs?" asked Nurse Parker, with an indignant toss of her head.

"Why, haven't you yourself said that the dear child's mother don't see him scarcely for days together, what with missionary meetings here and temperance there, and speaking for this thing and that. I don't say but what she ain't a good Christian lady, but your own family's your first duty, say I."

Parker felt that she had gossipped a little too much, so with a stiff "I wish you good afternoon, mum," she trundled her perambulator off.

The "fretfullest child" lay back in his carriage, his wide-open eyes fixed on the blue sky, but with pathetic lines of pain and weariness still on the tiny face. One small foot lay lame and helpless under the embroidered cover, and one hand clasped that of the little sister walking by his side.

"What did Mrs. Biggs say about mamma?" asked the little girl, before the nurse had taken many steps.

"Law, Miss Dottie, if you ain't a little pitcher! Why, she said your ma was a dear, good lady."

"What's a little pitcher?" began Dorothy, but nurse refused to answer any more questions until they reached home.

Upstairs in the nursery an elder brother was waiting.

"I say, nurse," he began, as Parker took off the children's hats, "do you know this is Willie's birthday? Can't we have something special for tea?"

"I want a party," said the lame child, petulantly.

"Bless the child," said Parker. "Well, you can have one little boy or girl to tea. There's time to fetch them."

"May I really? Anyone I like?" asked Willie, eagerly.

"Yes, anyone," answered Parker.

"Then I'll have mamma—I'd like her best of all."

A hush fell on the excited children.

"Why, you can't; she's busy," said Dottie.

"I say, you go and ask her, Dot," said Fred; "she might come just for once, and especially on Willie's birthday."

"'What is it, love?' asked Mrs. Godfrey." p. 58.

"It ain't no use, for she's got ever so many meetings on now," said Parker; but she brushed Dottie's hair nevertheless, and tied the bow of her sash carefully, and the child went.

Downstairs, in the dimly-lighted drawing-room, Mrs. Godfrey sat. She was a young, delicate woman, and, tired after her morning's visiting and writing, reclined wearily among the ample cushions of her sofa. Around her lay the scattered sheets of an address she had written, to deliver that evening, on the "Responsibilities of Mothers." Mrs. Godfrey had a gift for speaking—a gentle, womanly eloquence that touched her hearers, and made her earnestly listened to. She had come to live in Millborough, a large manufacturing town, soon after marriage, when she was young, too, in the Christian life, and anxious for work. Speaking occasionally at mothers' meetings, her gift became known, and she was eagerly sought after to take part in other kinds of religious work in the place.

Mrs. Godfrey was very happy in those days. The very exercise of her talent gave her pleasure, and the knowledge that she was doing useful work for the Master made her glad. But then came other responsibilities and duties in her own nursery at home, and perplexities began. Something outside must be given up, of course; but there were always those to urge the cause of "wider work," "your great talent," and to suggest that much might be left to "such an excellent nurse."

So, as Fred and Dottie and Willie grew up, Mrs. Godfrey found herself more and more engrossed in outside work, and, while loving her children dearly, knew very little of the nature of their characters. She never discovered how self-indulgent Fred grew; nor, as Parker, with her many virtues, loved gossip and thought nothing of telling the children what was not exactly true, that Dottie too was growing up into the habit of falsehood and exaggeration. While as for poor crippled Willie, Mrs. Godfrey little imagined how the child would fret himself to sleep night after night, not as Parker said, "out of sheer naughtiness," but from longing for mother love and comfort.

Visiting among the factory people, Mrs. Godfrey had been much struck with the frequent neglect of the children while the mothers worked in the mills, and to-night she was to speak on the subject. So are we often busy with the mote in our brother's eye and neglectful of the beam in our own.

There came a little tap at the door, and Dottie crept in, shyly.

"What is it, love?" asked Mrs. Godfrey, drawing the child to her, and mentally contrasting Dottie's well-cared-for appearance with the dirt, raggedness, and unhealthiness of the children who were to be her theme to-night.

"It's Willie's birthday, mamma; and, please, he wants you to come to tea in the nursery. He won't have Bertie Knowles, nor Johnnie, nor anyone but mamma. And we're going to have cake and jam. Do come."

"Dear little Willie," said Mrs. Godfrey, drawing Dottie nearer. "Tell him mamma's very sorry, but she must go out to-night. Why, it's time to dress now. Run away, Dottie dear."

In the hall Mrs. Godfrey met her husband just coming in.

"Going out again, Emily?"

"Yes, Robert. Why, you are looking very tired to-night."

"Not more than usual," said Robert.

He sighed as the door closed. How was it some men could tell their wives everything, and share even their business anxieties with them? He never told Emily these, though he could imagine what a comfort her gentle sympathy would be. But then she was so seldom at home, and when she was, she seemed preoccupied with outside work.

Robert Godfrey never found fault, even to himself, with his wife; he believed firmly in her goodness and her affection for him. Nevertheless he felt a want.

As for Mrs. Godfrey, the eloquent appeal she was going to make to the women whose lack of sympathy and neglect to make home comfortable drove their husbands to the public-house, flashed unaccountably into her mind.

Robert Godfrey ate his solitary meal, and then went upstairs to the nursery. All was quiet; the fire burned low, there were no signs of occupation anywhere. Where were the children?

The children were on a forbidden expedition.

After tea, Parker had gone downstairs, as she often did, for a chat with the other servants, leaving the children to amuse each other.

"'Tisn't a bit like a birthday!" said Fred. "But I'll tell you what we'll do, Willie. I'll carry you down to the spinney. It won't be dark for a good while yet, and Parker will never find out."

So the children crept out, Fred easily bearing Willie's light weight at first; through the garden, down a gloomy lane; through a hedge, and into a small copse which still remained just outside the town. The trees stood out clear against a red sunset as Fred set Willie down on the damp moss, and the child heaved a sigh of contentment as he gazed at the glowing sky.

"There, Will! Now you sit there and look at the pretty sky, while Dot and I see if we can find that nuthatch's nest. It *was* a nuthatch, Dottie, that I saw last week; just like the one in the bird-book."

The two wandered off, and Willie sat alone. The red sky faded into a dull crimson, and then into grey, and the wood grew mysterious and dreadful, but still the children did not come. A bat flew wildly about above his head, driving the sensitive child almost distracted with terror.

It grew darker, and the glow from the factory furnaces in the distant town lit up the sky with a strange glare. The child's fear grew unendurable, and when something started in the hedge he screamed aloud, and began, on hands and knees, to make his escape. He struggled out of the wood and across the dark field. Then, overcome with pain and fear, he fainted.

* * * * * *

When Mrs. Godfrey came home from the meeting that night she found a doctor's carriage at the door, and two men bending over Willie's little bed—the doctor and her husband.

"Oh, Robert! What——"

Robert took her hand and led her gently away.

"It is brain-fever, we fear; the result of a shock to an already sensitive brain." And then he told her how, becoming uneasy about the children, he had gone into the garden, and then along the lane. Here he met Fred and Dottie in distress at having lost Willie.

"We only left the wood a few minutes," sobbed Fred—"well, perhaps it was a good while, and it got dark, and we can't find him. He's not in the wood."

So with a lantern they searched lane and wood and field, and there, in the hedge bottom, they found Willie's little prostrate form.

For days and weeks Willie hovered between life and death, fancying himself in his delirium still in the terrible dark wood, and then crying out for his mother. Her

presence and the touch of her hand seemed to calm him, and as she sat there with the precious little hot hand in hers, Mrs. Godfrey's eyes were opened.

There came a day when, worn out with ceaseless watching, Mrs. Godfrey slept, and awoke to find her husband standing by her side. "God has spared him, Emily; the fever has gone."

In their sorrow, and then their joy and gratitude, the husband and wife grew nearer to each other than ever before. And with the keen sight of love and sympathy Emily found that Robert was bearing troubles that she did not share.

It was "only business," but it was wonderful how anxiety seemed to be lightened by his wife's sympathy, and the knowledge that she valued his love and integrity more than money and success.

So Robert went to his work with lightened anxiety and clearer brain, and Emily found in her own family scope for as grand a work as she need have.

And it is wonderful, too, how much use Mrs. Godfrey still finds for the exercise of her special talent, though she has put "home first." As Mrs. Biggs said to Parker the other day, "We women always feels it does us good to hear Mrs. Godfrey talk. She knows a mother's feeling, she does, and a mother's difficulties too. And it ain't the fine things a person says, but the things they does, as preaches the best sermon, after all."

HOW TO PACK A TRUNK.

OUR grandmothers would have opened their eyes at the thought of a professional trunk packer. And yet, the fancied and real wants of modern life are such that the packing of one's wardrobe for safe transportation is nowadays one of the fine arts. When we reflect that the good condition of its contents, upon arrival at the journey's end, will depend upon the manner in which the trunk is packed, we can see that it requires great judgment to pack it just right.

Every mother should take special pains to teach her girls this art, not only for their own comfort, but because they can often thereby help their friends, and be the "Good Samaritan" to many a weary invalid.

It is work that is specially adapted for womanly fingers, for most men seem to think that nothing is needed but physical force, and their notion of packing is to roll up every article, and squeeze the bundles into corners, and put the heaviest articles on top.

Before starting upon a task that will require a long time, and will demand much thought and planning, the packer should go from room to room, from closet to closet, from bureau to bureau, and select exactly what she intends to take with her. This is the only manner by which everything can be secured, and nothing mislaid or left behind.

It is a good plan to do your packing in a lower room, as it is much easier to bring things down than to carry them up, and then it is not so hard to lift the trunk when filled, nor so difficult to get it out of the house. Nearly all staircases bear honourable scars that have been won in a battle between trunk and porter.

When everything has been collected, and the time of the journey draws nigh, the trunk should be brought down, its interior dusted, and all its broken straps, corners, locks, etc., carefully mended.

The heavy articles, shoes, books, underwear—in short, everything that will bear pressure—must be placed at the bottom. Over these fold a layer of newspapers or a soft old sheet.

In folding dresses, if the trunk is too short to admit of the skirt lying at full length, be sure and fold it carefully over a little at the top. All strings attached to steels, in gowns, should be untied. Tissue paper should be placed between the folds of good dresses, and also over passementerie or jet trimming. This lessens the danger of creasing, and keeps dust and lint from settling there.

Dress waists should be laid smoothly in long shirt-boxes. All the collars, laces, ruchings, ribbons, and handkerchiefs should be placed in pasteboard boxes, and packed with clothing on each side, so as to keep them steady.

Hats and bonnets are the most difficult to manage, unless there are special compartments for them, and of these there are never enough. They should be wrapped, each alone, in tissue paper, and then covered with stiff brown paper, which should be pinned firmly round them. They should then be placed in boxes just large enough to hold them, and packed in the middle of the trunk, where they can be held steady by the clothing around them.

Do not place your jewellery and money in your trunk. A far better plan is to make a stout bag of chamois skin, place your valuables in it, and fasten it securely inside your dress waist or any other portion of your attire most convenient. Above all, do not place your valuables in a hand-bag that you might lay down on a carriage seat or hotel table, and leave there to be lost for ever.

All garments that are liable to crushing should be placed at the very top of the uppermost compartment, and if they are carefully laid they will be subjected to but little pressure.

If you are going to a place remote from chemists' shops, or where the services of a physician may be hard to secure, it is well to provide yourself with a few simple remedies, lest you may suffer under some emergency. Half-a-dozen bottles of old-fashioned, well-known medicines, some camphor, some prepared mustard plasters, and a few soft cloths for impromptu bandages would be useful articles to have with you when away from home.

Some of your favourite toilet-soap will take the place of the bad-smelling stuff so often found in hotel toilet-rooms. All bottles should be plainly labelled, firmly corked, wrapped first in cotton batting and then in paper, and placed in boxes.

Ink and shoe-polish should never be packed in a trunk. It is better to buy such things when you arrive at your journey's end.

If you are packing for children, be sure to remember their little playthings. Make a place for dolly and her wardrobe, and pack a small box with odds and ends of silk and cardboard, embroidery needles, transfer pictures, scrap-books, and other things, so small in your estimation, so necessary to their happiness.

When the little creatures are taken away from their familiar surroundings, and deprived of the toys and games they love, it is no wonder that they get into mischief and are an annoyance to everyone. In short, the packing of a trunk is like everything else—it requires thoughtfulness, good judgment, unselfishness, and a sincere desire to oblige others to make your work a success.

"'That's the only thing that ever frets me,' said Mrs. Wyness." *p.* 62.

A ROD THAT BUDDED.

BY ISABELLA FYVIE MAYO.

Mrs. Alison stood at her window, gazing dreamily down the pretty curved road on which it looked.

She was not a young woman; probably she was much nearer forty than thirty. Her slight, elegant figure and clear complexion might have made her look younger than her years, but for an expression of weariness and listlessness which was settled on her face, bringing out lines that might otherwise have remained invisible.

Maud Alison sometimes said, with the half-playfulness which often veils real meaning, that "she felt very old."

Many people thought her a much-to-be-envied woman. She had never known anything but perfect health. She belonged to a highly respected and admirable family, where the sons were all worthy, and the daughters all estimable, and where the aged parents still survived to rejoice over the well-doing and well-being of their offspring. Maud herself was married to a good and clever man, honoured among his fellows, and deeply attached to his wife and to his home.

Of course, there was a cross somewhere; but then every life has its cross, said Maud's friends, when they wondered, as they often did, why she was not brighter and happier. It was sad indeed that her two little ones had died, the one in teething convulsions, and the other in scarlet fever. But, as they repeated, every life has its trial, and this one was tender and pathetic rather than terrible or crushing.

And all they said was quite true. Every life does have its trial, but the light or the gloom of the life is determined not by the trial, but by the way in which the trial is taken. Does the breaking of our heart serve to let in more light and love and labour? Or do its ruins fall inward and choke the soul and shut out the sunshine?

Maud and her husband had taken their sorrow very quietly. They believed themselves "resigned to the will of God." This common grief drew them closer together than ever. Each silently felt that now there was only the other to live for. Mr. Alison surrounded his wife with every comfort and daintiness. He met her wishes before she had fairly uttered them. She had unlimited lecture tickets and library subscriptions at her command. Almost every day he brought home something which he thought might please her, though it might be but a bunch of early violets. And on her side, she lived for his home-coming. The hours between his morning departure and his evening return became a mere waking dream of him, in which she planned little surprises to win his praise.

In the first sore agony of their common loss, this warm, still atmosphere of mutual tenderness was very soothing. But what would happen to a convalescent if he sought no air more bracing than that of the chamber of his sickness?

Maud Alison became aware that as the sharp pang of grief died away—as it will always die—a strange, grey blank came in its place. There was no savour in life. Her very comforts felt comfortless. She was conscious that she had to "make believe" to be grateful for her husband's little gifts and surprises, or to be interested in the books he brought home to read and discuss. Nothing seemed to matter very much. She felt that on his side, too, there was conscious effort. True, he had outer-world interests and duties, which might help him somewhat. Yet she could understand from the tone of some of his remarks that even these had paled. His income was increasing; for what end? Everybody knows that there are times when the most agreeable exertions become a strain, and when there is no urgent demand for that strain, it is almost sure to be relaxed, and then the whole nature relaxes too.

The household life went on serenely without any effort on Maud's part. The store of old china grew, the new curtains were of daintier fabric, and the fresh portière of richer plush than before. Maud Alison, as her friends said, "had everything." But in her heart was the unceasing cry, "O that it was with me as in times past!" and the still more terrible dread (which she would not yet quite admit even to herself) lest this restlessness of hers—the last sign of the lost joys—should die away by-and-by, and leave her quite content in the acquisition of Crown Derby cups and Chelsea figures, the arrangement of table decorations, or the perfection of a new sauce. She had visions of herself and her husband growing older, studious of thermometers and wandering in hydropathics in search of "climatic conditions," and connected with society chiefly as subscribers to any institutions or organisations energetic enough to pursue their contributors wherever they go!

Such were the morbid images which would intrude on her mind as she stood dreamily gazing from her parlour window. She tried not to give way to them; she struggled

to rouse herself from them, only all the diversion she could find for herself seemed so aimless and supererogatory.

She gave herself an impatient shake, and proposed to herself to go out and see after some new underclothing which she had lately ordered. True, the drawers of her wardrobe were already richly stocked, but she and Mr. Alison had lately heard of some novel material strongly recommended by "the faculty," and they had instantly determined "to try it."

She had long ago laid aside her severer mourning. She put on her velvet hat and jacket, which harmonised so pleasantly with her soft, grey dress. Very beautiful and stately and serene she looked as she moved along, and when she passed from her own pretty "Crescent" into the humbler turnings, many a woman whose life was only too full of the excitement of making both ends meet, and the interest of training the children to turn out well, looked up and envied the leisurely lady as she passed.

Her destination was a little paved court opening off the High Street. She knocked at a low, green door, and was admitted by the sempstress, a thin, energetic woman, who invited her to enter and see the progress which had been made with her "order."

Mrs. Alison went in, and sat down. The room was very poor and bare, exceedingly clean, but a little disordered by scattered shreds and patches. Mrs. Wyness, the sewing woman, cleared a chair, making brisk apology.

"I find I can't help the mess," she said. "But I do get it cleared up every Saturday night. Since I've had to take in sewing, I feel the getting rid of the sight of it is part of the Sunday's rest. It's something to look forward to. When we can't always have things as we like, it makes it quite a treat whenever we get 'em." And she looked up and smiled as if she quite meant what she said.

"And how are all the children?" asked Mrs. Alison.

"Quite well, thank you, ma'am," replied Mrs. Wyness. "They're away at school now—I'm expecting them in every minute."

Her bright face shaded for a moment. "I daresay they interrupt her work," thought Mrs. Alison. "Poor thing—and it is their bread! But my trial is to have no such interruptions!"

"You must have hard work," she remarked—"the house, the sewing, the children—everything, of course, devolves upon you. I think you really do wonders to manage so well."

The sempstress gave her quick little laugh. "Aye, ma'am," she said, "we widows have to keep up the house, and to keep it too! But the back grows to the burden. I don't know how I'd get on without my husband if I had time to sit and brood! I hadn't even a day for that, and I thought it hard at the time, but now I see differently. I remember wailing out to a friend of mine, who was a widow herself, that 'I'd never be the same woman again, never.' And I couldn't think what she meant when she answered, 'No, Betsy, of course you won't ever be the same—at least, I should hope not; for any waste is always bad—and sorrow is such a costly thing that it's awful when it's thrown away!' But I think I begin to understand what she meant. If one doesn't run forward when a blow falls, it fells one to the ground, useless. And, after all, trying to keep the place and the children as Richard Wyness would like to see them, seems to hold us two together still."

But again the shadow fell over the worn, keen face, and there was a light sigh.

"Are your children doing well at school?" asked Mrs. Alison.

"Yes, truly," replied Mrs. Wyness; "and I won't deny that it is a blessing that they can go free to the Board school."

"Do you find that they get roughened by mixing with all and sundry there?" inquired the lady. "I should think your children have been much better brought up than many of their fellow-pupils." She was anxious to reach the root of some evident regret in this direction.

"Well, ma'am, that may be so," said Mrs. Wyness. "But I tell them they've not got to do or to speak as others do, but as they know they should, and leave others to take example by them. And there's good and bad of all kinds, refined or rough. There can't be anything much worse anywhere than what I'm told goes on at some of the grand schools where parents pay hundreds a year for their children. No, ma'am, it's only that sometimes I fret about Bertie's violin. Seeing that his eyes are too weak for many things, it did seem so like a providence for him; but if it's ordered otherwise, then it must be for the best."

Bertie's violin! Just as his mother said that, the three children came in. But Mrs. Alison's curiosity was aroused, and taking the youngest one, a laddie of three, upon her knee, she continued the conversation, and soon elicited the little history. The widow's eldest boy, not yet ten years of age, had early shown a wonderful gift for music. His dead father had been his only teacher, and his instrument a violin on which Richard Wyness himself had been a tolerable performer. But that violin, along with sundry other possessions of the brighter days, had

"She told him all about her visit." p. 62.

had to be sold during those trying weeks of transition from one state of life to another, which had inevitably followed the death of the poor salaried clerk. And, indeed, there would have been little use in retaining it, since there could be no more lessons given by love, and certainly no means to pay for any.

"That's the only thing that ever frets me," said Mrs. Wyness, resolutely resuming her brighter manner. "The hard work and the hardship are nothing—so long as they carry out what *he* meant—but when they won't do it anyhow, why, it does smart a little! Yet one can't do more than one's utmost, and I reckon those who are gone higher up are satisfied with that. After all, they may see things different from what we do."

Mrs. Alison walked homeward at a brisker pace and with a brighter face than usual. Some of the keen-visaged widow's words had thrilled through her like an electric shock! Her own sorrows had not made her "run forward"—she knew that—she was assured it had never before occurred to her that this might be their meaning. It had seemed to her rather that their one alleviation was in the possibility of hiding herself from further effort and care and responsibility.

Was she growing into what she would like the mother of her mourned-for children to be? Was she doing anything which, as Mrs. Wyness said, might seem "to hold them together still"?

She went straight to her bedroom to lay aside her walking apparel. She turned to her wardrobe and opened a locked drawer. Her frame shivered with a strange convulsion as she looked down at its pathetic contents—the garments of her little ones, as they had been laid aside after their deaths.

"Some of them will fit Mrs. Wyness's youngest child," she said to herself, taking them out and examining them. There was one on which she had been at work when her last darling had sickened. "I will finish this at once," she murmured, and her tears fell fast as she polished the needle which had rusted in the seam.

After dinner she resumed her task. She had not talked much during the meal, but Mr. Alison had thought that she seemed brighter and more responsive than she had been of late, which rather puzzled him, as he thought he saw traces of recent crying. So when he noticed what she was working upon, he said to her, gently—

"Maud, why should you try yourself in this way?"

She looked up, with a rainy smile. "I am going to give this to a fatherless child," she answered. "I begin to think that maybe nothing is so trying as to try to spare oneself from being tried!"

"I want to ask your opinion and help concerning a plan I should like to carry out," she went on. Then she told him all about her visit to Mrs. Wyness, and little Bertie Wyness's failing eyesight, and his now stultified musical gift.

"I am thinking," she said, "that I should like to procure him a violin, and to pay for good lessons—in short, to undertake a professional education which will secure him a livelihood at least, even should he become blind."

Mr. Alison toyed with his moustache. He was struck by his wife's renewed animation, and he realised that her suggestion went straight to a longing of his own heart which he had felt, but could never have expressed. Yet he also saw the less pleasant possibilities of the plan, and felt bound to state them.

"It will be undertaking a serious responsibility," he said. "Of course, it may bring a great blessing on all sides. On the other hand, the young fellow might turn out unsatisfactory, and even if he proved somewhat of a success, we must always remember that gratitude is a crop which depends far less on the seed which is sown than on the soil where it falls. It is the most uncertain of crops! We must never do anything in the hope of reaping it."

"What you say is quite true," she answered, sweetly "But, dear," and her voice grew very soft and low, "we should have done our best for our own children in the hope of helping them to be satisfactory, and we should never have thought about gratitude in that matter at all!"

Of course, Maud Alison had her way. And her husband was the first to own that nothing had so re-awakened the old home-feeling as the sounds of Bertie Wyness's violin, when he came up to display his prowess and his progress to his kind friends.

Maud Alison did not rush about seeking to relieve her pent-up heart by meddling where no intervention was wanted; but as time passed on, the natural course of her own life brought her many occasions when she could serve and aid and counsel the young, by whose growth and development she was helped to realise a yet deeper spiritual experience, and to feel a heavenly kinship with her own dear ones, out of her sight behind the veil of death. Of course, her chosen ministry brought her a great deal of suffering—that "wholesome suffering," even "salutary anguish," which convinces the heart that it is still living and expanding, and which is supremely the lot of those who watch over the opening years of other lives. But she had learned the secret significance of sorrow, and under any new and varied blow she sought only to "go forward," and to take care that each pang should not be "wasted," but patiently endured till it was brought to bear a hundred choice fruits of wisdom and love.

Of course, she had plenty of true joy also. But there comes a time of life and of experience when, through our realisation that God is Love, we also understand that joy and sorrow are but differing sides of His own blessedness.

A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE.

OBERTSON of Irvine was once asked by a student the old scholastic quibble, "How many souls can be supported on the point of a needle?" "Oh, dear me, yes," he answered; "that is easy enough. I can tell that." "How so?" said the student. "Well," replied Robertson, "as I was walking home the other night along the sea-shore, I passed a house where a poor widow lives; her husband was drowned at sea last winter. She has five little children, and as I looked through the window I saw in the firelight two little golden heads in the bed yonder, and another little golden head in the cradle, and two other children sitting at the mother's knee. She was working away with her needle, which was flashing in the firelight, and was going as hard as it could go. So," concluded Robertson, "I know how many souls can be supported upon the point of a needle—five, don't you see?"

As, with Robertson, we gaze through that window, "we seem to look on the whole vision of domestic life, on the mother toiling and never calling it toil; upon the vision of innumerable women all the world over who give themselves away, and are not so much as thanked for it!"

But, dear mothers, your love is not thrown away, your toil is not unrewarded, your self-sacrifice is not all thankless work, for your influence, that most wonderful of all a mother's powers, will follow your dearly loved children all their life through.

There will be no fear of your children failing in the battle of life if you are careful to nurture them now with loving care and motherly solicitude, to make home *home* to them, to make righteousness inviting, and religion bright and real. Then, when their turn shall come, send them forth into the battle of life clothed in the armour of a mother's influence, guarded with the shield of faith in God and home, and grasping tightly the sword of integrity. They may have many a fall and receive many a wound, but the influence of their mother's love, and the all-watchful care and mighty arm of their mother's God will never allow them to be utterly cast down. Rather, in the end, they will prove more than conquerors.

The writer of the present article can never feel grateful enough for his godly mother's influence and love. Though she died when he was quite a child, her influence and the memory of her love have followed him all through life, and been to him as angels of light in many a dark hour.

At a meeting in London of City men, a few years ago, a speaker made some reference to his mother's influence and love that at once called forth a hearty and deeply sympathetic response from the whole meeting, and as many a keen, calculating, business man, yearly growing harder in his search after wealth and position, wiped the tears from his eyes he felt the better for the earnest, telling words and the memories they had awakened.

Let me add yet another illustration to the foregoing. A gentleman who had travelled in many lands, and seen much of life at its best and its worst, testified that whenever he was beset with great temptation and was inclined to yield to it and fall into sin, he used to imagine he felt the touch of his mother's hand on his head, as he had often felt it when, as a boy, he knelt at her knee to say his evening prayer. The touch ever brought to him deliverance, and saved him many times from grievous failure in the journey of life.

Oh, mothers, what a mighty power for good you wield over your children! How intensely sad that your great power should ever be prostituted to the service of evil! But how terribly true it is that this is often done.

We know mothers whose selfish love for their children will not allow punishment of them when they need it, because of the pain such punishment brings to their mother-heart. The result is that their children grow up selfish, unruly, and a plague to society.

We know others, busy, toiling, anxious mothers, who issue commands at random to their children, never heeding whether they are obeyed or not, until the noise or naughtiness of the little ones becomes unbearable, when they rush at them and punish them with unwonted and brutal severity. Is it any wonder that children so punished grow up disobedient and disrespectful?

Others, again, in their selfish indolence relegate the training of their offspring to servants, tutors, or governesses. Such parents seem to utterly forget the *heart* needs of their little ones. They appear to think that so long as the bodily wants are supplied—mere food and clothing provided—all their duty is discharged. But, for lack of that maternal love which no stranger can give, their children grow up practically orphans, and without affection themselves. Can we blame quick-sighted, sensitive children for estimating such mothers at their true worth, and altogether failing to show them any love or respect?

Then there are others, worst of all, who encourage their children in sinful habits, and then hypocritically weep and wring their hands because they do not grow up virtuous and good. A friend of the writer, who to-day fills a drunkard's dishonoured grave, was destroyed by the evil teaching and example of his professing Christian mother. When as a boy he committed acts of petty pilfering in the shop where he was apprenticed, she, instead of rebuking, encouraged him. When she perceived his growing fondness for intoxicating liquors, she did not show him his danger, and banish the tempter from her home, but she rather encouraged him in his evil habit. What wonder, then, that her clever boy should grow up to lead a wild, reckless life, and early fill the grave of a swindler and a drunkard, leaving his poor wife and innocent children to struggle with poverty and keen disgrace! Do you wonder that we thought the mother, as she stood heart-broken by her son's grave, was but receiving a just punishment for the neglect and carelessness of past years? Had she only sought God's guidance, and followed His counsel, she might have led her boy through the perilous ways of youth to a strong, self-reliant, God-fearing manhood, and the lad might have been a comfort and support to her through her declining years. Now she must journey on alone, and always with the sad consciousness that it was she herself who first set her own son's feet in the broad way of evil.

God save you from using your precious influence over your little ones for evil, dear mothers! May it ever be only for good! God grant you the love, wisdom, and grace you need for your great work, and make your children to rise up and bless you, acknowledging that every noble thought and holy aspiration they possess they owe, under God, to their mothers' influence!

JOHN T. PEACE.

A MOTHER'S NOTES ON DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

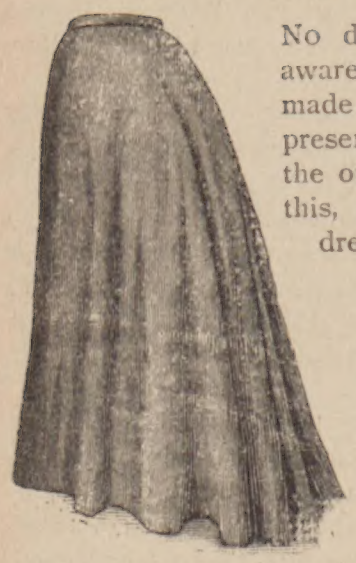

Fig. 13.

No doubt most of our readers are aware of the attempt that is being made to introduce crinolines as the present fashion. Perhaps some think the outcry is only a newspaper scare; this, however, is not the case, for dresses *à la* crinoline have appeared in the high-class fashion-books for some months past. Most women are agreed that there is no advantage, and a great deal of unnecessary inconvenience, both to themselves and to others, in wearing a crinoline; and some are suggesting that an anti-crinoline league should be formed, and vigorous effort is being made to drive them out of fashion. However advisable such a league may appear, we venture to think it is hardly necessary, for if every sensible woman would make up her mind that, fashion or no fashion, she will abstain from this hideous mode of dress, the crinoline would be at once banished.

There are some great changes being made in the style of dress skirts, the chief tendency being to make them much wider at the bottom, and to have little or no fulness at the waist. One skirt we saw lately had no less than five gores, while others are cut without any seams except at the back, there being some extra wide materials made, which render this style possible.

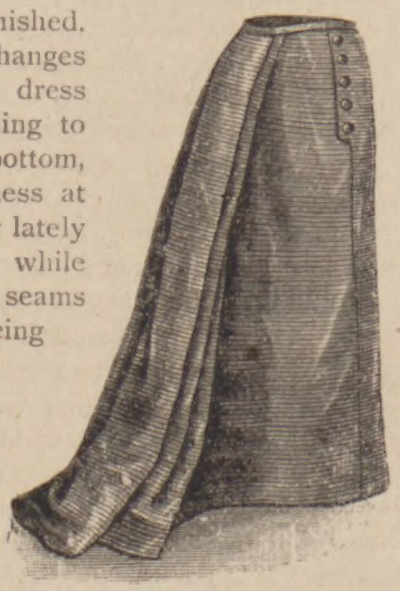

Fig. 14.

Then, also, we see double and even treble skirts coming to the front again. Surely these cannot need a crinoline to add to their extent.

Figs. 13, 14, and 15. Here we show three different styles for making dress skirts. Fig. 13 is after the bell shape, and is cut so as to do without even the dart pleats at the waist, and yet it hangs full at the sides and back. Fig. 14 shows a gored skirt with double box-pleats at the back; while fig. 15 is arranged in pleats at the side as well as the back. All these skirts are lined throughout, and a piece of stiff muslin is inserted in the hem at the bottom, which keeps the skirt nicely in place. Fig. 16 represents a lady's dress, the style of which is suitable for making in cloth, serge, or any firm material. A dress of this kind is not so difficult to make as may at first appear. It is necessary to get a good fitting lining first of all, and on to this the plain waistcoat front is secured. The loose coat fronts are turned back with revers, and finished off with a fancy braid trimming. These fronts must be faced with the material, and lined with sateen, or something to match the material, and are joined in with the side and shoulder seams. The sleeve is cut with a full top, which gradually gets narrower to the cuff. The skirt shows another variety, having pleats on the left side as well as at the back.

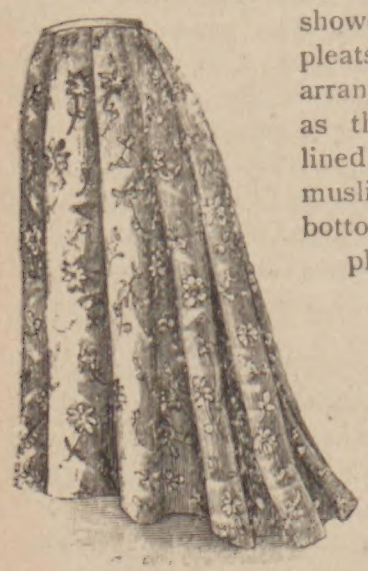

Fig. 15.

Fig. 17 is a dress for a girl between ten and fifteen years of age. Any fancy material will be suitable. Over the fitting lining at the back of the bodice the stuff is gathered, and drawn down full to the waist. In the front is a piece of gathered silk, and below this a corselet band, which must be made separate, and hooked on the left side, as the dress fastens down the centre. The jacket fronts are let in at the side seams, and the skirt is set on in gathers. This dress will take from four to five yards of material.

Fig. 17.

Fig. 16.

Fig. 18 illustrates a dress for a younger child, say from seven to ten years of age. It fastens at the back, and the waist is finished with a band of the same material, hooked under a rosette. The fichu is trimmed with rows of braid or velvet, as is also the skirt band and cuffs. This style is suitable for serge, rep, or tweed, and will make a very useful school dress. Short, single, or double capes are being made of the same material as the dress, which gives a very useful outdoor wrap for this season of the year. We can supply such cape patterns, if our readers require them, with or without the dress.

Flat patterns can be supplied. Figs. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 6½d. each, post free. Address, "M. C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, E.C.

Fig. 18.